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Dalton Laboratory Plan may help to solve some of the problems of modern education by adapting the work of the school to the interests of pupils and helping to care for individual differences.

W. D. BOWMAN

American education.—Criticism of our educational system is no new thing. We are constantly being confronted by it from some new angle. Some of it is valid. Much of it is not. We react to it in various ways, and in our reaction to the criticism we determine its value. Education is many-sided, and in order to keep it so we should welcome criticism from many diverse sources. Yet we are prone to object to criticism from those in authority, even when most tactfully and helpfully submitted, on the ground of bias and lack of a sufficiently intimate knowledge of the individual problem of school procedure criticized.

One can conceive, then, of a form of criticism coming from a source much less well informed, made up principally of opinions, but opinions of men well acquainted with educational problems in general, which would be very helpful and extremely valuable as representative of an outside point of view, impersonal and impartial, giving us an opportunity to see ourselves as others see us.

Mr. Osburn¹ has gathered together criticisms from a great number of English, French, and German educators, covering a period of time from 1853 to the present. These he has arranged and grouped under the headings: "American Educational Philosophy," "The American School System," "The Teacher," "Elementary Education and the Kindergarten," "Secondary Education," "Universities and Colleges," and "Education as a Means of Control." In each case the author gives a sufficient background so that the reader may understand the point of view and then gives both favorable and unfavorable criticism of the topic. While admitting that some of the criticism is ill founded because of lack of understanding of our national and educational ideals on the part of the persons making it, he holds that "the central tendencies of two hundred such observers are likely to be near the truth."

The author concludes that "the criticisms which have been quoted have emphasized two fundamental principles upon which the American educational system rests. The first of these is the belief in the equality of all men"; the second, "the belief in the indefinite perfectibility of the individual." The study is valuable because of the broad point of view, a quality not always inherent in the work of our own American writers.

ERNST E. WELLEMAYER

City school administration.—The rapidly expanding scope of school activities as well as the rapidly increasing enrolment in public schools of both elementary and secondary grades require that the city school superintendent be

¹ W. J. OSBURN, *Foreign Criticism of American Education*. Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 8, 1921. Washington: Department of the Interior. Pp. 158.

prepared to assume a constantly enlarging responsibility. The administrative officer of the school system has frequently found his position difficult because of the lack of any authoritative definition of relationship between his position and the duties which have gradually become identified with it.

A recent study¹ seeks to determine the actual relationship of the superintendent to the board of education and the activities it controls as this relationship is defined by law and as it is understood by both school men and members of boards of education.

Following an introductory review of the historical development of the office of city superintendent of schools, the author presents a summary of the results of his analysis of the laws of the forty-eight states as these relate to the problem of his study. The superintendent's relation to the board of education, the public, other municipal authorities, other school officers, local, county, and state, is considered, and the specific powers conferred upon him are classified. Similarly, the legal status of the city school superintendent in thirty-four representative American cities is studied. Here the city charter and special legislative acts relating to the administration of schools in individual cities or in cities of a given class are the sources of material. The author finds that the authority to fix the responsibility for the exercise of various functions of city school administration is vested in the state legislatures and that this authority has been variously delegated to the electorate, boards of education, the superintendent, and city, county, and state officials. As regards special city charters, it is found that "practically no specific provisions for school administration are made by special charters that are not also included somewhere in general legislation for city school systems" (p. 98). The tabular summaries of the author's analyses of these documents are unfortunately presented on separate sheets not incorporated in the book.

An interesting chapter records the returns from a questionnaire sent to superintendents, university teachers of school administration, members of state departments of education, and members of local boards who were asked to give their judgment concerning the powers the superintendent and the school board should properly possess. Summarizing the replies of the different groups of individuals concerning the proper distribution of authority with respect to thirty-five specified functions of school administration, the author says:

The modal judgment gives a fairly complete picture of the judgment of the two groups and the responsibility that they would vest in the superintendent and board of education, respectively. The majority of the professional group would make the superintendent responsible for taking the initial step and also for executive action with the board approving either before or after action in each of the thirty-five functions with the exception of appointment of secretary to the board of education and the various questions pertaining to buildings and grounds. The appointment of the secretary they would leave solely with the board of education, and for the various

¹ JOHN CAYCE MORRISON, *The Legal Status of the City School Superintendent*. Baltimore: Warwick & York, 1922. Pp. 162.

questions pertaining to buildings and grounds they would make the superintendent responsible for the initial action and leave the executive action in each of the five functions to the board of education.

The lay group would make the superintendent responsible for supervision of instruction and would make the board of education responsible for the appointment transfer, and dismissal of all workers connected solely with the material side of the school plant, for all functions pertaining to buildings and grounds, and for the taking of the census. For all other functions they would place the power of official initiative in the office of superintendent, but differ as to the approval of administrative acts [p. 119].

A final chapter presents an outline of the author's conception of the relationship that should obtain between the superintendent and board and between both these and other school officers. The specific powers and duties belonging to each are given in detail. The outline, which does not include many new suggestions as to administrative practice, probably reflects the best thought and practice as these are now generally understood.

The study has evidently been made with care and constitutes a valuable contribution to the literature of school administration.

N. B. HENRY

Freshman instruction in grammar, composition, and literature.—There are two schools of thought concerning the proper relationship between composition and literature in a course of study. Undoubtedly the rigid separation of the two, long the practice of most college courses, is gaining favor in the secondary schools. To many, such rigid separation seems a misfortune. Under skilful teaching, theoretically at least, pupils should constantly gain from the study of good literature, the models having a more or less direct effect upon their own writing and speaking. At any rate, this is the teaching theory which underlies a new book¹ of college Freshman rhetoric. The author says "almost no book mingles in anything like the right proportions the study of typical mistakes in grammar, the elements of rhetoric and English style, and the study of our great classics" (p. iv).

In twenty-one chapters, ranging from "First Steps in Composition" to "How to Appreciate Poetry," Professor White presents what has evidently been his own course of Freshman English. The book does not seem too difficult to be used as a text in the senior high school. One can readily think of high-school classes which might much more profitably spend a semester on the material of this book than upon the "Conciliation Speech" or similarly difficult and remote literature. The present writer knows no book that would be more suitable as a text for a group of high-school Seniors who will finish their education with the twelfth grade.

R. L. LYMAN

¹ HENRY ADELBERT WHITE, *English Study and English Writing*. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1922. Pp. 336.